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SECRETARY- INDIRA GHANDI MEETING

1. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH DINESHI SINGH SECRETARY MET WITH PRIME MINISTER INDIRA GHANDI FOR ABOUT HALF AN HOUR.
2. PRIME MINISTER OPENED MEETING WITH EXPRESSION OF CONGRATULATIONS ON APOLLO 10 MISSION.
3. SECRETARY THEN REVIEWED SITUATION IN VIETNAM URGING TIME HAD COME FOR NLF TO TALK TO SAIGON. REVIEWED OUR IDEAS FOR FAIR, SUPERVISED ELECTIONS, INDICATING THERE SEEMED TO BE OPINION NLF STRENGTH WAS 15-20 PERCENT OF POPULATION; IF SO THIS WOULD BE REPRESENTED IN ELECTIONS. QUESTION WAS WHETHER NLF WAS PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE. PM SAID SHE REGARDED PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AND OUR LATEST MOVES AS STEP FORWARD.
4. SAID SHE ATTACHED "GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO RELATIONS WITH US." FELT THERE WAS POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. HOPED RELATIONSHIP WOULD HAVE A "NEW DIMENSION" WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.
5. PM INQUIRED ABOUT CONTE AMENDMENT AND HOW IT MIGHT AFFECT INDIA. SECRETARY SAID IT NOT LIKELY TO CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR INDIA AND THAT, WITHOUT COMMITMENT, WE WERE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING USE OF ESCAPE CLAUSE. PM SAID INDIA HAD SIGNIFICANT DEFENSE NEEDS. THERE WAS AN EXISTING THREAT ON ITS BORDERS, BUT MORE THAN THAT, EVERY COUNTRY HAD TO BE ABLE TO DEFEND ITSELF.
6. PM INQUIRED ABOUT STATUS OF US/SOV RELATIONS. SECRETARY SAID THEY WERE ENIGMATIC. RELATIONS WERE STARTING WITH THEM IN FRIENDLY WAY, AND THEY WERE OBSERVING THE AMENITIES. WE WERE WORKING MORE CLOSELY WITH THEM AND BELIEVED THIS WAS RECIPROCATED. WE WERE ACTIVELY ENGAGED WITH THEM IN NUMBER OF AREAS. IN ME SISCO AND DOBRYNIN WERE CONFERRING FREQUENTLY AND SECTY HAD TALKED TO DOBRYNIN FOUR OR FIVE TEMES. PM SAID SOV'S HOLD THE U.S. AT FAULT FOR LACK OF SETTLEMENT BECAUSE WE WOULD NOT SPEAK TO ISRAEL STRONGLY ENOUGH. SHE SAID SITUATION GETTING MORE AND MORE EXPLOSIVE. SECTY REPLIED WE MIGHT SAY SOV'S AT FAULT AND NOTED ISRAELIS CHALLENGED WHETHER SITUATION REALLY GETTING WORSE. RE SOV RELATIONS SECTY CONTINUED THAT WE WERE BOTH ANXIOUS TO ENGAGE IN SALT DISCUSSIONS AND HOPED TO DO SO WITHIN NEXT FEW MONTHS, AND THAT CONSULAR RELATIONS WERE EXPANDING.
7. ON VIETNAM SECTY SAID SOV'S HAD BEEN HELPFUL ON PROCEDURAL MATTERS, BUT WE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THEY WOULD BE HELPFUL ON SUBSTANCE OR NOT. WE HOPED THEY WOULD ASSIST AND THOUGHT IT WAS TO SOV ADVANTAGE (VIS-A-VIS CHINA) TO SEE A SETTLEMENT, BUT THEY SEEMED TO FEAR CHINESE WOULD EXPLOIT ANY HELP THEY MIGHT GIVE. NOTED ABOUT 70 PERCENT OF COMBAT STRENGTH IN SVN WAS NOW REGULAR NVN FORCES, SO SOV EFFORT WITH HANOI COULD BE HELPFUL. PM SAID MOST SOV POLICY NOW SEEMED TO BE GOVERNED BY THEIR CONCERN ABOUT CHINESE. AGREED SOLUTION SHOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO SOV'S AND SAID SHE THOUGHT NVN WOULD BE BULWARK AGAINST CHINA. IN DAYS WHEN INDIA WAS CLOSER TO CHINA, HO CHI MINH USED TO WARN THEM AGAINST CHINESE EXPANSIONISM.
8. SECTY THEN REVIEWED OUR IDEAS FOR TROOP REPLACEMENT, WITH SVN TAKING OVER MORE AND MORE OF RESPONSIBILITY, IN CASE NVN NOT INTERESTED IN NEGOTIATIONS. ASKED PM IF SHE THOUGHT US OUGHT TO PULL OUT ALL TOGETHER. AFTER MOMENTS HESITATION, PM SAID WITHHDRAWL WOULD HELP BUT WAY IT IS DONE WAS IMPORTANT. SECTY SAID HE THOUGHT IF WE JUST WITHDREW IT WOULD LEAD TO CHINESE EFFECTIVELY TAKING OVER IN SE ASIA-VIETNAM, LAOS, AND EVEN CHINESE EFFORTS IN THAILAND.
9. PM SAID SHE UNDERSTOOD WE WERE SEEKING TO TALK TO CHINESE. SECTY SAID WE WERE TRYNG TO DO SO, AS WERE THAIS AND OTHERS. ALSO CANADIANS AND ITALIANS WITHOUT MUCH SUCCESS. PM NOTED CHINESE-WEST GERMAN TRADE WAS RATHER HIGH. SAID INDIA SAW NO POINT IN BREAKING RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND HOPED CHINESE WOULD CHANGE SOME DAY. HAD INDICATED TO CHINESE INDIAN POSITIONS WERE NOT RIGID, BUT THERE HAD BEEN NO REACTION. SAID CHINESE WERE HELPING SOME OF INDIA'S HOSTILE TRIBES WITH ARMS AND TRAINING. IN INDIA CHINESE HAD SUPPORT FROM SOME POLITICAL AND ANTI-SOCIAL ELEMENTS. PRO-CHINESE COMMUNIST GROUP BELIEVED IN VIOLENCE AND EVEN OPPOSED EXISTING COMMUNIST STATE GOVT'S IN INDIA. THEY WERE SMALL BUT NEEDED WATCHING.
10. AT OUTSET MEETING SECRETARY HAD PRESENTED LETTER FROM PRESIDENT WHICH PM BRIEFLY READ, AND AT CONCLUSION PM ASKED SECRETARY TO CONVEY HER BEST WISHES TO PRESIDENT

ROGERS

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